

## Why you crave junk food! Sleep-related food cravings are real!



Does your regularly scheduled eating program go out the window when you don't sleep well? Craving high-fat, high-calorie foods after a bad night's sleep is a thing—and researchers have come closer to discovering why. Your tendency to grab a brownie or chips when you're exhausted appears to originate not with your willpower, but with your nose. In a series of experiments, researchers found that the brain's olfactory system goes into overdrive after sleep deprivation, making the smell of foods like cookies, pizza, and French fries particularly enticing. At the same time, sleep loss interferes with other brain processes involved in making food choices, affecting what you decide to eat. What to do about it? Prioritize shut-eye, first and foremost! Practice good sleep hygiene, and see a doctor if you think you may have a sleep disorder. On days

when you haven't slept well, short of putting a clothespin on your nose, remind yourself that you're likely to be vulnerable to unhealthy food.

Maybe don't walk by a bakery or fast-food restaurant if you can help it, and keep nutritious snacks on hand.